

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1 - 14. (Canceled)

15. (Previously presented) A method for inducing the activation and proliferation of natural killer (NK) cells, comprising:

contacting a human NK cell with a dendritic cell that can induce the activation and proliferation of NK cells, wherein the dendritic cell is a mature dendritic cell that has been produced from a monocytic dendritic cell precursor by contact with an effective amount of granulocyte-monocyte colony stimulating factor (GM-CSF) and interleukin 15 (IL-15).

16. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 15, wherein the mature dendritic cell is characterized by the expression of increased levels of CD80, and CD86 as compared to a mature dendritic cell cultured in the presence of granulocyte-macrophage colony stimulating factor (GM-CSF) and interleukin 4 (IL-4).

17. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 15, wherein the mature dendritic cell is characterized by the expression of an increased level of CD1a on the surface of the cell as compared to a dendritic cell cultured in the presence of GM-CSF and IL-4.

18. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 15, wherein the mature dendritic cell is characterized by the expression of interleukin 12 (IL-12), tumor necrosis factor α (TNF α), and GM-CSF.

19. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 15, wherein the NK cells and the dendritic cell are contacted *ex vivo*, or *in vitro*.

20. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 15, wherein the NK cells are substantially isolated.

21. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 15, wherein the NK cells are provided as a population of leukocytes.

22. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 21, wherein the population of leukocytes are further contacted with a population of antigen presenting dendritic cells.

23. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 15, wherein the cell NK cells are further contacted with an effective amount of a desired antigen.